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22 November 1985

TALKING POINTS

Further Reactions from West Europe

1. The first official reactions on the Geneva summit have begun to take shape.

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2. First statements of European leaders were mostly positive.

-- Mrs. Thatcher was very positive about reception by President as very warm and supportive.

-- David Owens characterized the talks as the start of a serious transformation of US-Soviet relations.

-- Kinnock noted that the consequences of the summit should not be exaggerated but, nevertheless, characterized the talks as a return to stability in US-Soviet relations.

-- Carrington also was positive and praised the President for personal attention to keeping Europeans informed.

-- Belgian Foreign Minister Tindemans stressed importance of personal links that have been created. He noted that INF negotiations have now been separated from the other Geneva talks and that a separate agreement would, therefore, be possible. He warned a questioner that it is too soon to characterize the summit as the start of a new detente, but concluded that he believes that the President is developing a personal philosophy of international relations and wants to be known as a man of peace.

-- Mitterand was ridiculed by Belgian papers for not attending President's briefing at NATO. He also held a press conference at 1500 local, 21 November, which concentrated on French domestic politics. He did note that the summit marked a warming of US-Soviet relations, but that SDI remained a block to further progress.

3. British and Belgian TV commentary was positive but stopped well short of euphoria. Common themes were that:

-- The President got what he wanted and did not give away anything, particularly on SDI;

-- Gorbachev will have to explain to his critics in Moscow his failure to place constraints on SDI. His press conference seemed to be the start of that explanation process. SDI remains controversial and could be a block to any further progress.

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4. Forty-five minutes of French TV newscast devoted about 30 minutes to Mitterrand's press conference, and about five minutes to the summit. It noted that the summit had "dedramatized" US-Soviet relations and pointed out that the two sides had expressed determination to reduce arms and hold more meetings. It characterized all this as not bad. What actions would now follow these words?

5. European industrialists and officials at conference on SDI sponsored by "The Economist" stated that they had not expected much from the summit but, within that context, characterized results as positive. Almost all saw Gorbachev as a new type of Soviet leader. Some then stated he, Gorbachev, was a man with whom the West could deal. Others, however, stressed that Gorbachev was part and parcel of the Soviet system and that it would be a dangerous illusion to expect him to make any fundamental changes in the Soviet system or in Soviet/Western relations.

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